

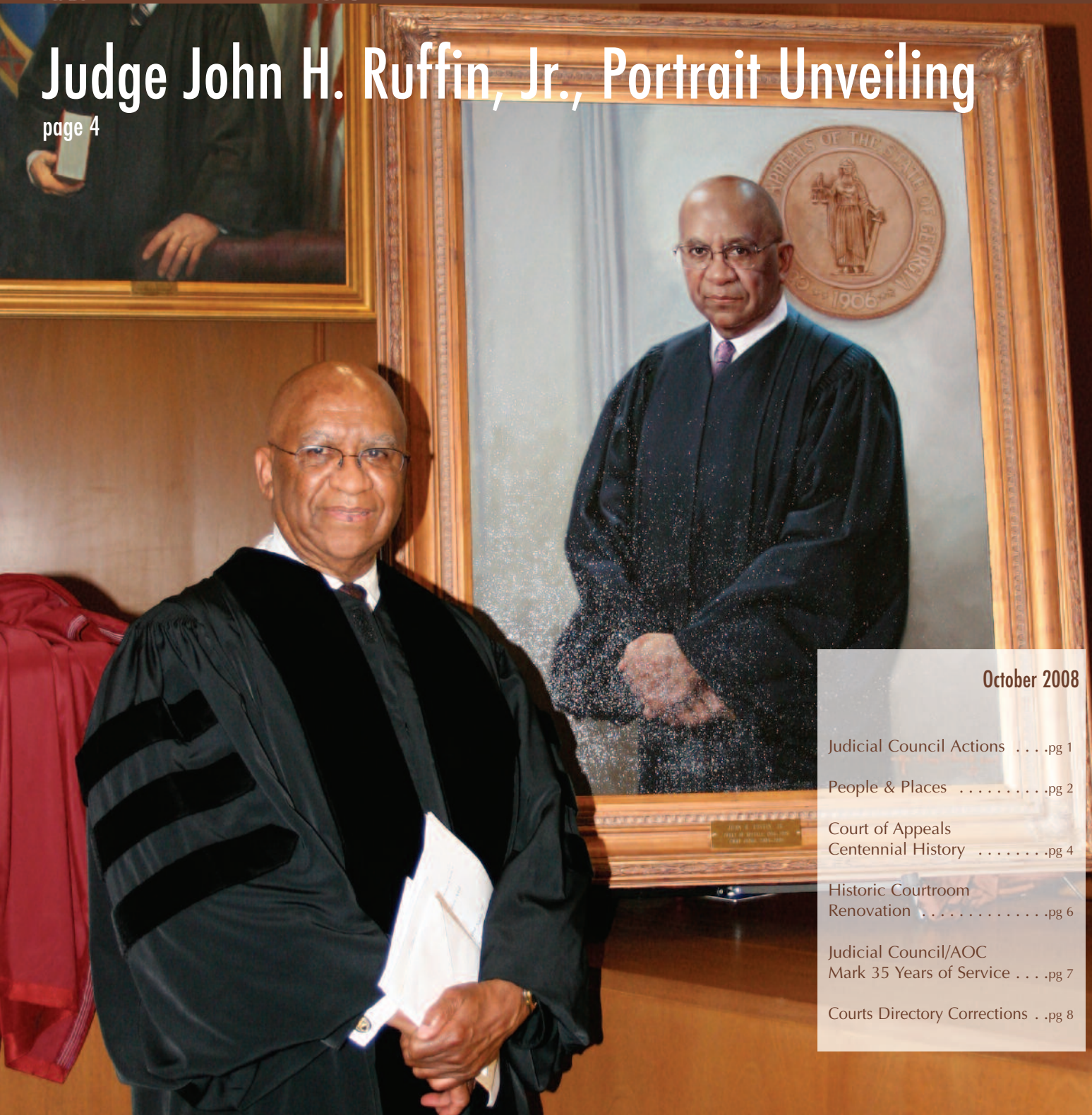


Georgia courts Journal

A Publication of the Judicial Council of Georgia

Judge John H. Ruffin, Jr., Portrait Unveiling

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Georgia Courts Journal

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Judicial Council Actions



The Judicial Council of Georgia, August 2008

The Judicial Council of Georgia carried out important business during the summer months, meeting June 3 in Savannah and August 26 in Atlanta.

Judgeship Recommendations

At its August meeting, the Council considered requests for new superior court judgeships. After reviewing statewide caseload data, the Council approved three new requests: Appalachian, Clayton, and Western. New requests and carry-overs were ranked by the Council in order of priority:

1. Piedmont Circuit
2. Flint Circuit
3. Clayton Circuit
4. Douglas Circuit
5. Northeastern Circuit
6. Western Circuit
7. Mountain Circuit
8. Southern Circuit
9. Appalachian Circuit
10. Tifton Circuit

Workload Assessment

Chief Judge Joe C. Bishop, Pataula Judicial Circuit, put forward three recommendations from the Workload Assessment Committee:

1. The deadline for receipt of letters requesting an additional judgeship, or the alteration of circuit boundaries shall be the close of business on the deadline date.
2. Letters of request for an additional judgeship or the alteration of circuit boundaries shall be sent to the Chief Judge of each judicial circuit, the Governor, the Lt. Governor and the Speaker of the House.
3. A "revocation of probation" shall be defined, for the purposes of counting cases, as the filing of a Petition for Revocation or the issuance of an order with the signature of the judge concerning Revocation of Probation.

Each motion was voted on and approved by the Judicial Council.

December Meeting

The next meeting of the Judicial Council will be held on Monday, December 8, 2008, at the Marriott Atlanta Gwinnett Place beginning at 1:30 p.m. Lunch will be served at 12:30, prior to the meeting.

Workman Recognized for Service on Board of Court Reporting

On June 3, 2008, the Judicial Council of Georgia recognized Judge Anne Workman, Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit, for her leadership and vision during her years of service to the Board of Court Reporting. Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears (below) presented the plaque to Judge Workman. ✍



People, Places, & Events

In Memoriam

♣ **Judge Charles M. Gravitt** of Jonesboro died on June 3, 2008. Judge Gravitt served as a municipal court judge in Lake City for 13 years; prior to his years on the bench, he was employed by Delta Air Lines for 35 years.

♣ **Judge Tommy Walton Ash** of Fitzgerald died August 10, 2008. Judge Ash served as Probate Judge of Ben Hill County since 1997.

♣ **Judge Robert B. Whatley** of LaGrange died on August 10, 2008. Judge Whatley, a 1981 Atlanta Law School graduate, served as Troup County magistrate and municipal court judge of LaGrange, Grantville, and Hogansville.

♣ **Judge Alvin A. Bell** of Waynesboro died of cancer August 12, 2008. Since 2001, Judge Bell served as Burke County magistrate and as a municipal court judge. Prior to his service on the bench, Judge Bell was a police officer with the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, DC for 21 years.

♣ **Judge Bill Shingler** of Donalsonville died August 13, 2008 as a result of a motor vehicle accident. Judge Shingler, a Woodrow Wilson School of Law graduate, served as judge of the municipal court of Donalsonville.

♣ **Senior Judge James B. O'Connor** of Chauncey died September 5, 2008. Judge O'Connor served as superior court judge in the Oconee Circuit from 1965 until his retirement in 1980. He served in the US Army, Judge Advocate General Corps, from 1951-1955, achieving the rank of Major.

Appointments

Superior Court

On May 19, 2008, Gov. Sonny Perdue swore-in **Judge Michael D. DeVane**, Superior Court of Waycross Judicial Circuit. Judge DeVane had served as Solicitor-General of Ware County since 1996. He fills the position left vacant after the death of Judge Stephen L. Jackson.

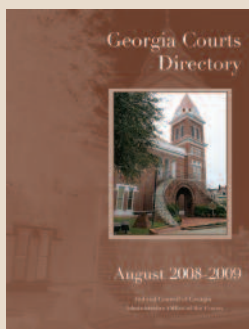
Please note: **Judge Stephen L. Jackson** was a graduate of the Walter F. George School of Law, Mercer University. The *Courts Journal* mistakenly listed him as UGA Law School alumnus.

2008-2009 Georgia Courts Directory Now Available!

Your copy should be on your desk by now.

Additional copies are \$30, plus shipping costs. For

more information, contact Ashley Stollar at ashley.stollar@gaaoc.us



♣ On July 24, 2008, **Judge Howard E. McClain**, Alapaha Judicial Circuit, was sworn-in by Gov. Sonny Perdue. Prior to this appointment, he served as a municipal court judge. Judge McClain fills the vacancy created by the resignation of Judge Brooks Blitch.

♣ On September 3, 2008, Gov. Sonny Perdue announced his appointment of **Judge Wade Padgett**, Augusta Judicial Circuit, to replace **Judge Duncan Wheale** who will retire in January 2008. Judge Padgett currently serves as Chief Magistrate of Columbia County.

State Court

♣ On September 26, 2008, Gov. Sonny Perdue announced judicial appointments for the State Court of Hall County and the State Court of Henry County. Both positions were created by legislation in the 2008 session:

- **Judge Larry A. Baldwin**, formerly Solicitor General of Hall County, joins the state court as its third judge.

- **Judge Jason T. Harper** will serve as the fourth Henry County state court judge. He currently is a partner with Crumbley & Harper, P.C.

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People, Places, & Events cont.

Prosecuting Attorneys

Gov. Sonny Perdue recently appointed the following prosecuting attorneys:

Ms. Ashley Wright, District Attorney, Augusta Judicial Circuit

Mr. Kevin S. Cauley, Solicitor-General, Grady County

Mr. J. Keith Pollette, Solicitor-General, Treutlen County

Mr. Joseph Raymond Johnson, Jr., Solicitor-General, Ware County

Judge Peggy H. Walker, Douglas County Juvenile Court, and **Judge Berryl A. Anderson**, DeKalb County Magistrate Court, have been named to the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Family Violence Department Advisory Committee.

Transitions

Judge James McDonald, Juvenile Court, Western Judicial Circuit, retired on September 30 after 23 years on the bench. **Associate Judge Robin W. Shearer** has been appointed to succeed Judge McDonald.

On August 5, 2008, **Judge Tracy Graham Lawson**, Juvenile Court, Clayton Judicial Circuit, defeated incumbent District Attorney **Jewell Scott** in a runoff election. Judge Lawson will take office as District Attorney on January 1, 2009.

Judge Dwayne Forehand, Probate Court of Dooly County, resigned his position on September 12, 2008, after 35 years in office.

Senior Judge John D. Crosby was elected to the Georgia Senate in a special election held August 26. Judge Crosby served as superior court judge in the Tifton Judicial Circuit for 20 years prior to his 2000 retirement.

Honors

On June 6, 2008, **Judge Aaron Cohn**, Juvenile Court, Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit, received the State Bar of Georgia's 2008 Tradition of Excellence Award. Judge Cohn is the nation's longest serving juvenile court judge, having served in that capacity since 1965.

Administrative Judges

New Superior Court Administrative Judges have been elected as follows:

Judge Charles Paul Rose, Jr., First District

Judge John D. Allen, Third District

Judge David T. Emerson, Seventh District

Judge Michael C. Clark, Ninth District

Chief Judge Lawton E. Stephens, Tenth District

Law Day

Judge Patsy Porter, State Court of Fulton County, was joined by



Judge Patsy Porter

Gov. Sonny Perdue, and Secretary of State Karen Handel to celebrate Law Day

at the State Capitol on May 1, 2008. The event, sponsored by the Superior Court of Fulton County and the Atlanta Bar Association, included students who produced posters and videos interpreting the Law Day theme: The Rule of Law: Foundation for Communities of Opportunity and Equity. ❧

State Bar Seeks Judges for National Mock Trial Competition

The National Mock Trial Competition is headed for Georgia. In May 2009, high school mock trial teams from around the nation will converge on the Fulton County Courthouse in Atlanta to participate in the annual competition.

For more information on volunteering for a panel or monetary contributions, contact Ms. Stephanie Ricke, High School Mock Trial Coordinator, at 404-527-8779 or mocktrial@gabar.org ❧

Judge John H. Ruffin, Jr., Honored by

The Court of Appeals of Georgia honored former Chief Judge John H. Ruffin, Jr., on September 11, 2008, with a ceremony and reception for the unveiling of his portrait. Friends, family, and colleagues in the standing-room only crowd applauded as Judge Ruffin's son Brinkley removed the velvet drape revealing his father's portrait. Judge Ruffin's portrait, like those of other former Chief Judges, will hang in the Court of Appeals courtroom.

Speakers honoring Judge Ruffin included Judge Herbert E. Phipps; Judge John J. Ellington; former Judge Marion T. Pope; former Governor Roy Barnes; Ms. Linda Klein;

Mr. Bobby Lee Cook;
Mr. Lendon Gibbs; and
Mr. Vernon Jordan.
Former Governor Roy Barnes



Judge John H. Ruffin, Jr., (at podium) was applauded by the distinguished speakers who regaled the standing-room only audience with stories of his wit, bravura, and intellectual acumen.

highlighted Judge Ruffin's career as a young civil rights lawyer prior to his appointment as the first African-American on the Augusta Judicial Circuit bench in 1986. He commended Judge Ruffin as a man whose fearless determination opened doors for African-Americans.

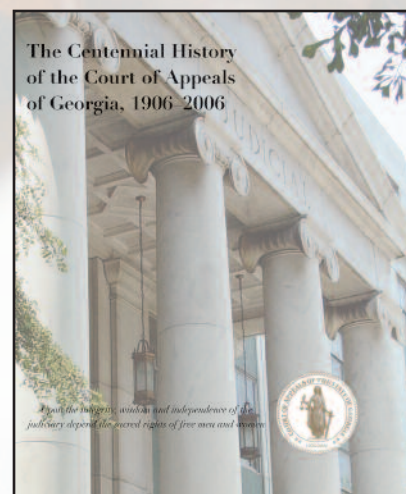
Judge Ruffin, a Howard University graduate, began practicing law in 1961. In 1986, he was appointed to the Superior Court bench in the Augusta Judicial Circuit. Governor Zell Miller elevated Judge Ruffin to the Court of Appeals in 1994. As Chief Judge in 2005-2006, Judge Ruffin was the first African-American to hold that position in the court's history. During his tenure as Chief Judge, he spearheaded the court's Centennial Year Celebration in 2006.

Judge Ruffin serves as a Presiding Judge until his retirement on December 31, 2008. His successor will be chosen in the November 4 general election. ❧

Centennial History Published

The *Centennial History of the Court of Appeals of Georgia, 1906 – 2006*, published by Mercer Press, will soon be available. The *History* chronicles the advent and growth of the state's intermediate appellate court — from its beginnings as a

three judge court sharing a courtroom with the Supreme Court in the State Capitol to its current twelve member configuration, the history of the court unfolds along with the historical events of the state and the nation. ❧



Court of Appeals of Georgia



“It is a long way from Waynesboro, Burke County, Georgia to Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals of Georgia. Jack Ruffin made that journey with class, excellence, hard work and sacrifice.”

Mr. Vernon Jordan, Law School Classmate

“Violence and hatred would have deterred lesser men, but they did not deter Jack Ruffin.”

Governor Roy Barnes
— on Judge Ruffin’s
civil rights work



1961 — Admitted to GA Bar

1986 — Appointed Superior Court Judge, Augusta Judicial Circuit

1994 — Appointed to Court of Appeals of Georgia

2005 - 2006 — Chief Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia



Judge John H. Ruffin, Jr.

“He was not always successful in the courthouse, but he was always successful in raising the consciousness of society with regard to civil rights and equal rights.”

Judge John J. Ellington
Court of Appeals



“Judge Ruffin is best defined by years of service as a lawyer and a judge. He rose to the challenges and obstacles placed before him. He has earned his place of honor.”



Judge Marion T. Pope,
Former Chief Judge,
Court of Appeals



“When you’re first you have to be the best, otherwise there won’t be a second or third or thirty-third.”

Ms. Linda Klein
— First Woman President, State Bar of Georgia

“The process of judging is never easy and it is not for the weak or vacillating. It calls for the best and the bravest and Jack Ruffin fits that role.”

Mr. Bobby Lee Cook, Distinguished Trial Attorney



Stephens County Courthouse Renovation

A century ago Stephens County farmers and townspeople often gathered on the lawn of the stately, brick courthouse during trial recesses or as a jury deliberated a verdict. Slow hours might pass before a court bailiff would step out onto the second-story porch to signal that the judge was calling the court back into session. All those interested made their way back inside to reclaim their seats and hear the proceedings. Those days, of course, are gone never to return, but the old Stephens County Courthouse itself is slowly making a comeback. In

November the citizens of Stephens County will once again gather at the historic courthouse as it reopens following extensive renovation.

Rededication Ceremony

Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears will give the keynote address on November 23, 2008 at the rededication of the old courthouse. The spacious, high-ceilinged second floor courtroom will be on view as will the ground floor county offices that are now fitted to accommodate comput-

ers and other courtroom technology, security measures and handicapped access. The architectural integrity of the original structure has been carefully reclaimed over the past three



The second-floor courtroom under construction.



This mural, painted in the 1930s, was uncovered during the renovation.

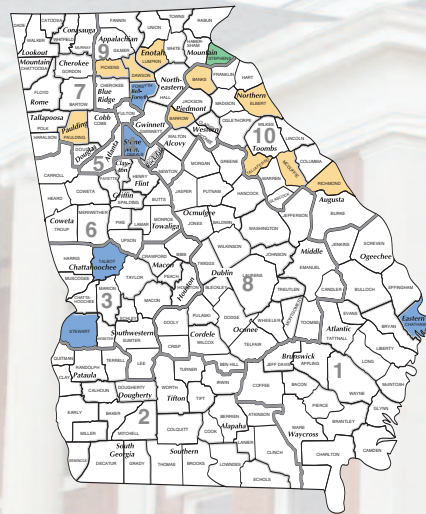
years. Craftsmen have painstakingly washed away a century's worth of paint and grime to reveal the original colors and décor. A mural depicting a pastoral scene was discovered in the former county clerk's office; it had been painted sometime in the 1930's by a local artist.

Judges of the state court and magistrate court will be housed in the restored building; and soon the courtroom will again echo to the rapping of a judge's gavel as plaintiffs, defendants, lawyers and others take

their places and another court session is brought to order.

On-going Courthouse Construction Projects

Throughout the state many courthouse projects are underway. In the Tenth Judicial Administrative District, construction valued at over \$1,000,000 is underway thanks to population growth in Banks, Barrow, Elbert, McDuffie, Richmond, and Taliaferro



Construction throughout the state. Stephens County, in green, will dedicate its historic courthouse on November 23, 2008.

counties. In other parts of the state courthouses in Dawson, Lumpkin, Paulding, Pickens, and Sumter counties have building projects.

Courthouse renovations are in progress in Chatham, DeKalb, Forsyth, Pierce, Stewart, and Talbot counties. ✂

Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts Mark 35 Years of Service

2008 marks the 35th anniversary of the Administrative Office of the Courts. The Judicial Council/AOC was established in 1973 to provide support services to the Georgia Courts. Over three decades the agency has

staffed judicial branch commissions and initiated projects intended for the benefit and improvement of the administration of justice. The AOC has carried out research studies, organized meetings and produced publications to assist judges in their daily work, from the appellate courts

in Atlanta to the smallest county court in the Ocmulgee Circuit.

Take a look at www.georgiacourts.org to learn more about the work of today's Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts! ❧

AOC Staff Notes

♣ On August 26, 2008, Ms. Jill Radwin, Child Support Commission Staff Attorney, received the Commissioner's Award for her work on the National Judicial-Child Support Enforcement Task force.



Ms. Eden Freeman, at left, with AOC Director David Ratley.

♣ Ms. Eden Freeman, AOC Assistant Director for Grants and Project Management, has earned recognition as a Grant Professional Certified (GPC) from the Grant Professionals Certification Institute.

♣ Mr. Kevin Tolmich has been named Assistant Director for Planning and Research. In addition to his duties assisting courts and judicial agencies with planning, Mr. Tolmich will oversee the Research section of the AOC.

♣ Dr. Greg Arnold has been named Assistant Director for Statistical

Analysis and Applied Studies. Dr. Arnold will oversee special study requests on issues that impact the judicial system and courts statewide. ❧

Contacting an AOC staff member via e-mail is now easier than ever. Beginning in September, use this simple formula to contact anyone in the AOC: firstname.lastname@gaaoc.us

Paulding Juvenile Court Selected for National Model Court Project

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) has chosen the Paulding County Juvenile Court as a National Model Court Program. The Paulding County Juvenile Court now joins an elite group of courts recognized for their commitment to improving outcomes for children and families involved in child abuse and neglect proceedings.

The Paulding Court, presided over by Judge Sandra Miller, is an active participant in the Georgia Court Improvement Initiative; a project of the Supreme Court of Georgia's Committee on Justice for Children.

Other sites selected as Model Courts include Austin, TX; Baltimore City, MD; Concord, NH; Hattiesburg, MS; Howell, MI; Lake Charles, LA; and Las Vegas, NV

For more information, contact Ms. Beth Locker, Deputy Project Director, Committee on Justice for Children, at 404-463-5227. ❧

"Your Guide to the Georgia Courts" Brochure is Available!

Call 404-656-6783 today for copies.

Courts Directory Corrections

Superior Courts

Alcovy Judicial Circuit

Judge Eugene Benton
F 266-1684

Juvenile Courts

Middle Judicial Circuit

Judge Sherri McDonald
sherrimcdonald@bellsouth.net

Delete: Judge Susannah L. Brown

Magistrate Courts

Fulton County

Delete: Judge Jane Morrison

McDuffie County

Judge David B. Moore
PO Box 252
Thomson, GA 30824

Municipal Courts

Enigma

Add: Judge W. Brent Hyde
15 Jenny Drive
Tifton, GA 31793
229-382-0515/F 382-1676

Jonesboro

Delete: Judge William West

Add: Judge Steven E. Lister
102 S. Main Street
Jonesboro, GA 30236
770-471-9000

Thomson

Judge David B. Moore
PO Box 1017
Thomson, GA 30824-7645
706-595-1781/F 595-2041

Warrenton

Judge David B. Moore
PO Box 109
Warrenton, GA 30828
706-465-3282

US Bankruptcy Court

Middle District

Chief Judge John T. Laney
706-596-7150/F 649-7871

Solicitor-General

Coweta County

Robert Stokely
robert@cowetasolicitor.com

Grady County

Delete: J. Kevin Chason

Add: Kevin Cauley
732 N. Broad Street, Suite B
PO Box 569
Cairo, GA 39828
229-377-1200/F 377-1202

Magistrate Courts Training Council

Delete: Judge Kimberly Warden

Add: Judge C. David Wood, Chair ☞

Superior Court Retirements

The following Superior Court judges are retiring December 31, 2008. These positions will be filled by election in November.

Judge Thelma Wyatt Cummings

Moore, Atlanta Circuit

Judge James R. Tuten,

Brunswick Circuit

Chief Judge Kenneth B. Followill,

Chattahoochee Circuit

Chief Judge Loring A. Gray, Jr.,

Dougherty Circuit

Judge Donald B. Howe,

Douglas Circuit

Judge William Ralph Hill,

Lookout Mountain Circuit

Judge Lindsay A. Tise, Jr.,

Northern Circuit

Chief Judge Philip R. West,

Oconee Circuit

Judge Robert W. Adamson,

Piedmont Circuit

Judge F. Larry Salmon,

Rome Circuit

Judge J. Richard Porter,

South Georgia Circuit

Chief Judge H. Arthur McLane,

Southern Circuit

Chief Judge Anne Workman,

Stone Mountain Circuit

Chief Judge Gary C. McCorvey,

Tifton Circuit ☞

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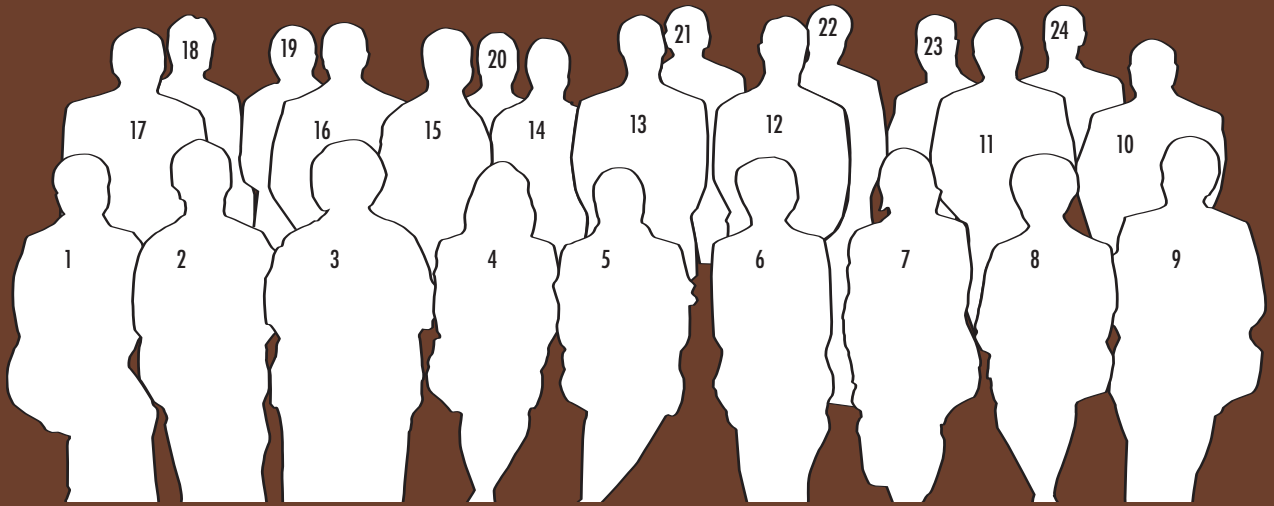
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Judicial Council

1. Judge Tammy S. Brown; 2. Judge Lillis J. Brown; 3. Judge Anne Workman; 4. Chief Judge Anne Elizabeth Barnes; 5. Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears; 6. Presiding Justice Carol W. Hunstein; 7. Judge Doris L. Downs; 8. Judge Tammy Stokes; 9. Judge Connie J. Holt; 10. Judge Richard T. Alexander, Jr.; 11. Judge Stan Smith; 12. Judge Charles Paul Rose, Jr.; 13. Judge David T. Emerson; 14. Judge Robert V. Rodatus; 15. Judge Michael C. Clark; 16. Judge John D. Allen; 17. Judge Ronnie Joe Lane; 18. Judge Melvin K. Westmoreland; 19. Judge Quillian Baldwin, Jr.; 20. Judge Steve Teske; 21. Judge Ronald E. Ginsberg; 22. Judge Lawton E. Stephens; 23. Judge John C. Carbo, III; 24. Judge Stephen S. Goss. Not pictured: Judge M. Yvette Miller.

Courthouse Spotlight



Montgomery County

County Seat: Mount Vernon

Built: 1907

Judicial Circuit: Oconee



Administrative Office of the Courts
244 Washington Street, SW, Suite 300
Atlanta, GA 30334